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## FINGER-PRINT EVIDENCE

**New Laboratory to Aid Murder Trials.**—A new laboratory which may play an important part in future murder trials, says the *International Police Service Magazine*, has recently been added to the already well-equipped Royal Institute of Public Health, Russel Square, W. C.

"Hitherto one of the chief difficulties of the medical witness called upon to determine the nature of suspicious-looking stains on the clothes of a person implicated in a murder charge has been, not to say whether the stains were blood or not, but to prove that, if blood, the blood was from a human being and not from an animal. One of the chief duties of the new serological laboratory of the institute will be to carry out a new test for determining the origin of bloodstains recently introduced by Prof. Uhlenhuff of Germany.

"The new test, it was explained at the institute, is, not meant to supplant the older tests by the microscope, spectroscopy, and by chemicals, but is a most important addition to them. It is carried out by means of rabbits which have been previously inoculated with successive small doses of human blood. After a time such a rabbit manufactures in his blood a substance which resembles somewhat the curative anti-toxic bodies a horse produces in its blood when inoculated with successive doses of diphtheria poison.

"The blood of such a rabbit when mixed with a solution of the suspected blood (such as might be made from dissolving out a bloodstain on a garment) gives a certain recognizable reaction if the blood is of human origin, but is unchanged if the blood is of any other animal. The single exception is the blood of the ape. The difficulty here could be overcome by using instead of rabbit serum the serum from an ape immunized against human blood.

"The means for making the test have been installed at the laboratory," it was explained, "so that a medical witness in any legal case can be able to obtain at once positive proof whether any disputed bloodstain is animal or human. The test is now officially required in Prussia in certain medico-legal inquiries, and it is expected by the council of this institute that the work of the new laboratories will fill a great want in this country." J. W. G.

**Infallibility of Finger-Print Evidence.**—A case was recently tried at the Highgate police court in London which brought out the infallibility of the finger-print test as a means of identifying criminals. A man who had previously been sentenced was accused of loitering with an intent to commit a felony and a Scotland Yard official attempted to prove his guilt by means of finger-print evidence. The accused, however, produced what appeared to be conclusive evidence that at the time of the offense alleged he was in the army, and he was accordingly discharged. Subsequently, however, it was ascertained that the army discharge which he had produced in evidence belonged to another man. Sir Alfred Reynolds, the magistrate before whom he was tried, said in explanation of the case: "Some comments have been made on this supposed failure of the finger-print method of identification and I am glad to correct the impression. The method is a good one and I do not know of a case in which it has failed. The police rightly attach great importance to it, and it is a pity that in this particular case some further information which was in the possession of the police at the time was not put before the court." J. W. G.

**Conviction on Finger-Print Evidence in Norway.**—The March number of the *Archives d' Anthropologie Criminelle* contains a report of a case of the

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conviction, on finger-print evidence alone, of a thief in the assize court of Christiania on October 14, 1910. The only evidence against the accused was the testimony of the director of the identification bureau, Daae, as to the identity of the finger prints of the accused with finger prints discovered at the scene of the crime on a pane of glass and on a syrup bottle. The accused denied the commission of the offense, but the jury, after a half-hour's deliberation, returned a unanimous verdict of guilty. It is said this is the first conviction in Norway solely on finger-print evidence. E. L.

**Identification Manual of the Madrid Police.**—In an article in the March and April numbers of the *Revue de Droit Penal et de Criminalogie*, Prof. F. Oloriz Aguilera, of the Faculty of Medicine of Madrid, described a manual for the identification of the habitual criminals of Madrid, in use by the police of that city. The plan of the manual was devised by Prof. Aguilera and is based on the possibility of utilizing a direct examination of the lines and ridges of the fingers for purposes of identification without the necessity of taking finger prints. The idea of this direct examination having occurred to Prof. Aguilera, he chose a classification of finger patterns into four types coinciding with that of Vucetich and devised a formula to represent each type, and also sub-formulas for a more detailed classification, and for four years tested the possibility of applying these formulas for the identification of individuals by direct observation of the fingers. The test being satisfactory, he compiled the manual, which makes a volume of 188 pages of text and 29 pages of instruction. The manual contains the criminal records of 603 individuals habitually resident in Madrid. It is composed of three sections, which he terms the morphologic, the dactyloscopic and the alphabetic sections, respectively. Each of the 603 individuals figures in each of the sections under a distinct number. The morphologic section contains formulas representing an abbreviated form of the Bertillon system for classifying photographs, with cross-references under each number to the data for the same individual in the other sections. The dactyloscopic section contains the formulas representing the finger designs. These are written in the form of numerical fractions, the numerator being a figure representing one of the four main types designated as Adelto, Destrodelto, Sinistrodelto and Bidelto; and the denominator being a number corresponding to one of the sub-classe into which each type is divided. The alphabetic section contains the name, occupation, place of birth, parents' name, kind of crime attributed to the person and penal record for each of the individuals listed. Each section contains cross-references to the other two. The manual is intended mainly to solve two problems as to identity. First, in the presence of a person at liberty but suspected, to verify with sufficient certainty to justify his arrest that he is the person wanted. Second, to discover the name and record of persons arrested. In practice it has been found to correctly solve these questions, with much saving of time and labor, if the person in question is listed in the manual. In the first case it is not necessary to arrest the person to solve the question of identity. No prints being required, the fingers can be examined wherever the person is found. If he proves to be the person wanted, the identification is immediate, and if not, it is not necessary to take him into custody at all. E. L.

**Is Law and Morality Instinctive?**—In an article in the *American Anthropologist*, for July-September, 1910, entitled, "The Morals of Uncivilized People,"